

WATCHMEN
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WATCHMEN



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WATCHMEN 4

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THE PHOTOGRAPH
IS IN MY HAND.

IT IS THE
PHOTOGRAPH
OF A MAN AND
A WOMAN. THEY
ARE AT AN
AMUSEMENT
PARK, IN 1959.



IN TWELVE SECONDS TIME,
I DROP THE PHOTOGRAPH
TO THE SAND AT MY
FEET, WALKING AWAY. IT'S
ALREADY LYING THERE,
TWELVE SECONDS INTO
THE FUTURE.

TEN
SECONDS
NOW.



THE PHOTOGRAPH
IS IN MY HAND.

I FOUND IT IN A
DERELICT BAR AT THE
GILA FLATS TEST
BASE, TWENTY-SEVEN
HOURS AGO.



IT'S STILL THERE, TWENTY-
SEVEN HOURS INTO THE
PAST, IN ITS FRAME, IN
THE DARKENED BAR.

I'M STILL
THERE,
LOOKING
AT IT.

*As play amidst the
chaos and drama*



THE PHOTOGRAPH IS IN MY
HAND. THE WOMAN TAKES A
PIECE OF POPCORN BETWEEN
THUMB AND FOREFINGER.
THE FERRIS WHEEL PAUSES.

SEVEN
SECONDS
NOW.



IT'S OCTOBER, 1985. I'M ON
MARS. IT'S JULY, 1959. I'M
IN NEW JERSEY, AT THE PAL-
ISADES AMUSEMENT PARK.

FOUR
SECONDS.
THREE.



I'M TIRED OF LOOKING AT
THE PHOTOGRAPH NOW.

I OPEN MY FINGERS.
IT FALLS TO THE SAND
AT MY FEET.



I AM GOING
TO LOOK AT
THE STARS.

THEY ARE SO
FAR AWAY,
AND THEIR
LIGHT TAKES
SO LONG TO
REACH US...



ALL WE EVER SEE
OF STARS ARE THEIR
OLD PHOTOGRAPHS.



I AM TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN MILLION KILOMETERS FROM THE SUN.

ITS LIGHT IS ALREADY TEN MINUTES OLD. IT WILL NOT REACH PLUTO FOR ANOTHER TWO HOURS.



TWO HOURS INTO MY FUTURE, I OBSERVE METEORITES FROM A GLASS BALCONY, THINKING ABOUT MY FATHER.

TWELVE SECONDS INTO MY PAST, I OPEN MY FINGERS. THE PHOTOGRAPH IS FALLING.



I AM WATCHING THE STARS. HALLEY'S COMET TUMBLES THROUGH THE SOLAR SYSTEM ON ITS GREAT SEVENTY-SIX-YEAR ELLIPSE.



MY FATHER ADMIRED THE SKY FOR ITS PRECISION. HE REPAIRED WATCHES.

IT'S 1945. I SIT IN A BROOKLYN KITCHEN, FASCINATED BY AN ARRANGEMENT OF COGS ON BLACK VELVET. I AM SIXTEEN YEARS OLD.



IT IS 1985. I AM ON MARS. I AM FIFTY-SIX YEARS OLD.



THE PHOTOGRAPH LIES AT MY FEET, FALLS FROM MY FINGERS, IS IN MY HAND.

I AM WATCHING THE STARS, ADMIRING THEIR COMPLEX TRAJECTORIES, THROUGH SPACE, THROUGH TIME.



I AM TRYING TO GIVE A NAME TO THE FORCE THAT SET THEM IN MOTION.



WATCHMAKER





IT'S MAY 12TH, 1959:
MY FIRST DAY AT
GILA FLATS.
PROFESSOR GLASS
IS SHAKING MY
HAND, ASKING
WALLY WEAVER
TO SHOW ME
AROUND.

THE SCENT OF
HIS TURKISH
CIGARETTE IS
THICK IN THE
CRAMPED
OFFICE.



I'M THIRTY YEARS OLD...

SO YOU'RE THIS
NEW GUY FROM
PRINCETON WE
HEARD ABOUT,
HUH? SAY, WASN'T
EINSTEIN AT
PRINCETON?

NOT
WHILE
I WAS.
HEARD HIM
LECTURE
ONCE,
THOUGH.



GEE, THAT MUSTA BEEN
SOMETHIN'. Y'KNOW, I HEARD
HE ARGUED WITH HIS WIFE.
CRAZY, HUH? A GUY LIKE
THAT, A GENIUS, EVEN
HE COULDN'T FIGURE
WOMEN!

WELL, I
GUESS HE'S
JUST HUMAN,
LIKE EVERY-
BODY ELSE.

WHAT'S
THIS
PLACE?



AHH, THIS IS
JUST WHERE
THEY'RE DOIN'
THE **INTRINSIC**
FIELD EXPERIMENTS.
IT'S LIKE, WHAT IF
THERE'S SOME
FIELD HOLDIN'
STUFF TOGETHER,
APART FROM
GRAVITY?

BEATS HELL
OUTTA ME,
BUT I'M
ONLY AN
ASSISTANT...

AND
THIS?



THIS IS OUR TIME-
LOCK TEST VAULT, SO THAT
WHEN THEY'RE TRYIN' TO
SEPARATE OBJECTS FROM
THEIR **INTRINSIC** FIELDS,
NO **RADIATION**
GETS OUT.

WE GOTTA
LOT O' NEW SAFETY
FEATURES LIKE
THAT HERE.



BUT HEY, LISTEN
...NOBODY AT **GILA**
GIVES A DAMN
ABOUT ALL THIS
JUNK.

C'MON...I'LL
SHOW YOU WHERE
THE **REAL** HEAVY-
DUTY THINKIN'
GETS DONE
AROUND
HERE.

WE
CALL
IT THE
BESTIARY



IT'S RIGHT THROUGH HERE ...

WALLY STEERS ME FROM THE ARIZONA SUNLIGHT INTO THE CROWDED BAR. THERE'S A SUDDEN SENSATION OF DÉJÀ VU: I'VE SEEN THIS PLACE BEFORE...



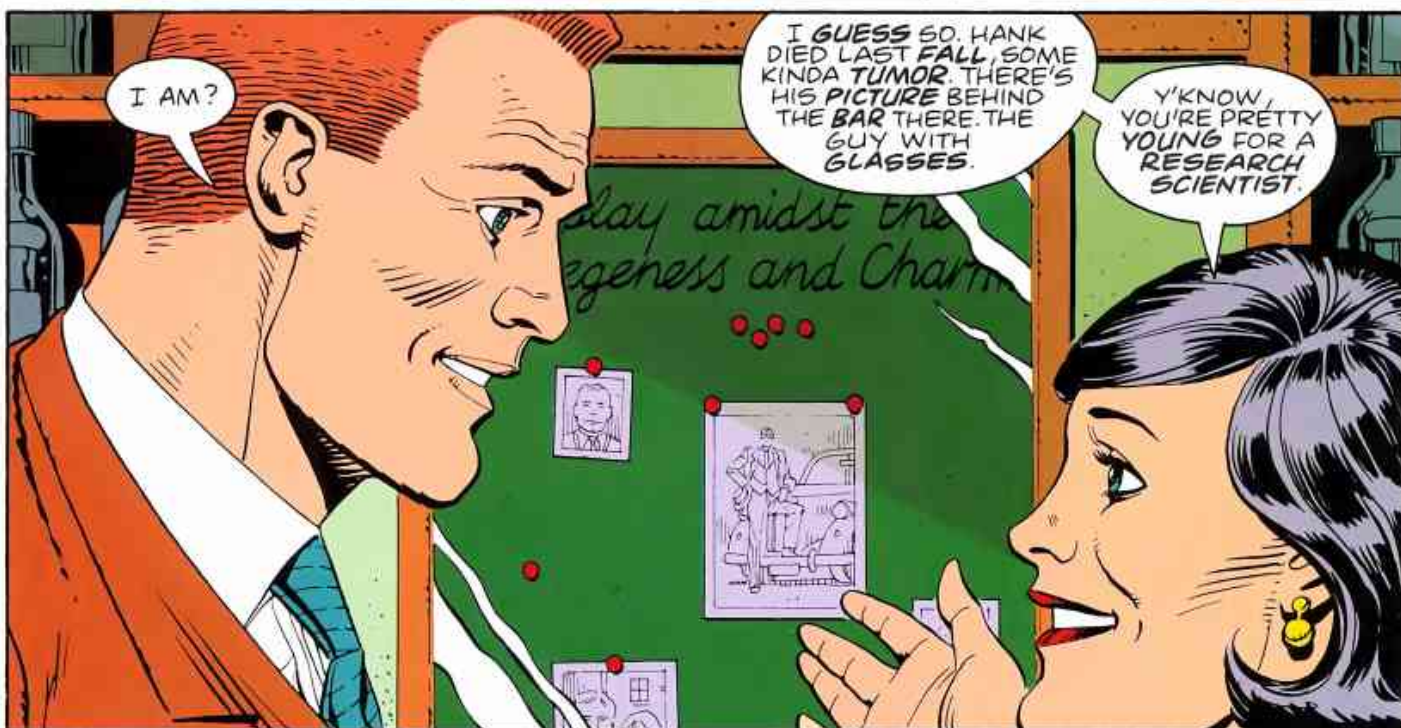
... EXCEPT THAT IT WAS DESERTED THEN, DERELECT, WITH STARLIGHT SHINING DOWN UPON ITS ROTTED FLOORBOARDS, THROUGH THE COLLAPSED CEILING...



THE ILLUSION VANISHES, ALMOST BEFORE IT HAS REGISTERED. IT'S MAY 12TH, 1959. WALLY IS INTRODUCING ME TO SOMEONE...

JANEY SLATER, MEET JON OSTERMAN. JON'S FROM PRINCETON.

OH... THE NEW GUY! YOU'RE REPLACING HANK MEADOWS, RIGHT?



I AM?

I GUESS SO. HANK DIED LAST FALL, SOME KINDA TUMOR. THERE'S HIS PICTURE BEHIND THE BAR THERE. THE GUY WITH GLASSES.

Y'KNOW, YOU'RE PRETTY YOUNG FOR A RESEARCH SCIENTIST.



WELL, YOU KNOW... MY DAD SORT OF PUSHED ME INTO IT. THAT HAPPENS TO ME A LOT. OTHER PEOPLE SEEM TO MAKE ALL MY MOVES FOR ME.

MM. I'LL BET.

CAN I GET YOU A DRINK?



SHE BUYS ME A BEER, THE FIRST TIME A WOMAN HAS EVER DONE THIS FOR ME. AS SHE PASSES ME THE COLD, PERSPIRING GLASS, OUR FINGERS TOUCH...



IT'S 1963. WE'RE MAKING LOVE AFTER AN ARGUMENT, OUR TENDERNESS IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO ITS VIOLENCE...

IT'S 1966, AND SHE'S PACKING: TEARFUL, CARELESS WITH ANGER...

THE PHOTOGRAPH LIES IN THE SAND AT MY FEET.

IT'S JULY, 1959. I'M RETURNING TO NEW JERSEY ON VACATION, VISITING OLD UNIVERSITY FRIENDS.

JANEY SHARES THE TRIP FROM ARIZONA. HER MOTHER LIVES IN JERSEY.



SHE CALLS HOME FROM THE STATION, BUT NOBODY ANSWERS. WE VISIT THE AMUSEMENT PARK, KILLING TIME UNTIL HER MOTHER RETURNS.

HEY, YOUNG LOVERS! HOLD IT!



BUT WE'RE NOT...

THERE! THAT'S JUST BEAUTIFUL. A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE, PARTICULARLY OF THE LADY...



HE GIVES US AN ADDRESS WHERE WE CAN PICK UP 75-CENT PRINTS, AND WE WALK OFF TOWARDS THE TILT-A-WHIRL, LAUGHING AT HIS MISTAKE.



BY THE SHOOTING GALLERY, JANEY'S WATCHBAND SNAPS. BEFORE I CAN PICK IT UP, A FAT MAN STEPS UPON IT. I TELL HER I CAN FIX IT.



HER MOTHER STILL ISN'T ANSWERING. WE DECIDE TO CALL AGAIN FROM MY HOTEL. WE BOTH KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN. EVENTS MESH TOGETHER WITH SOFT PRECISION...



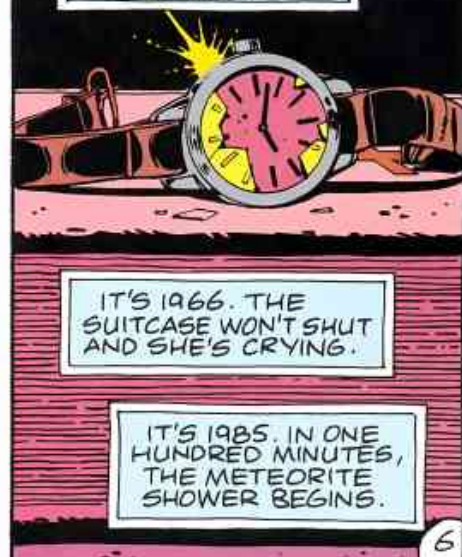
WE REACH THE HOTEL. SHE CALLS AGAIN. HER MOTHER STILL ISN'T HOME.



SHE ASKS IF I CAN REALLY FIX HER WATCH. WE SIT TOGETHER ON THE EDGE OF THE BED, EXAMINING THE DAMAGE.



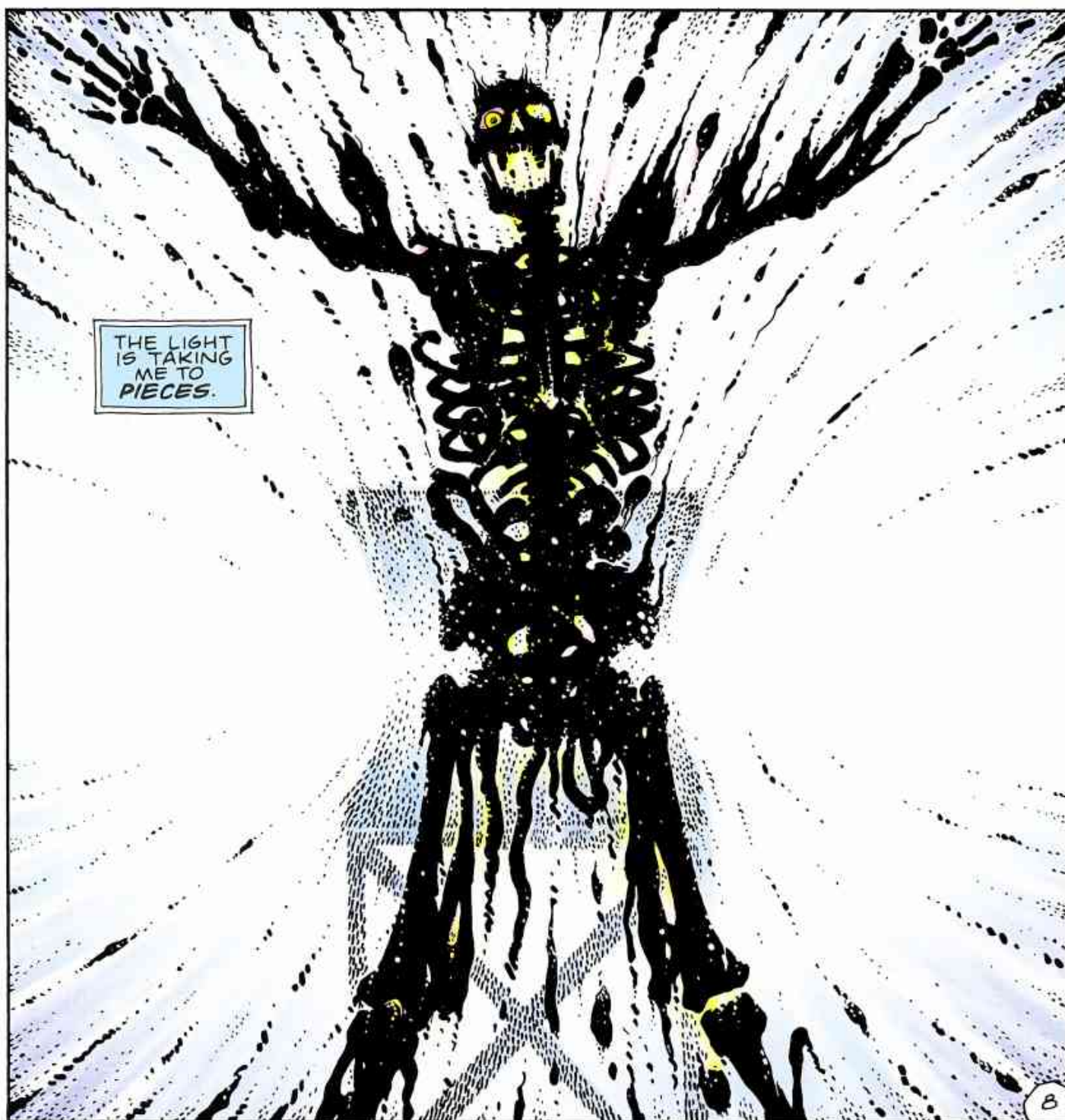
IT'S 1959. A PULSE FLUTTERS IN HER BELLY, BENEATH MY CHEEK.

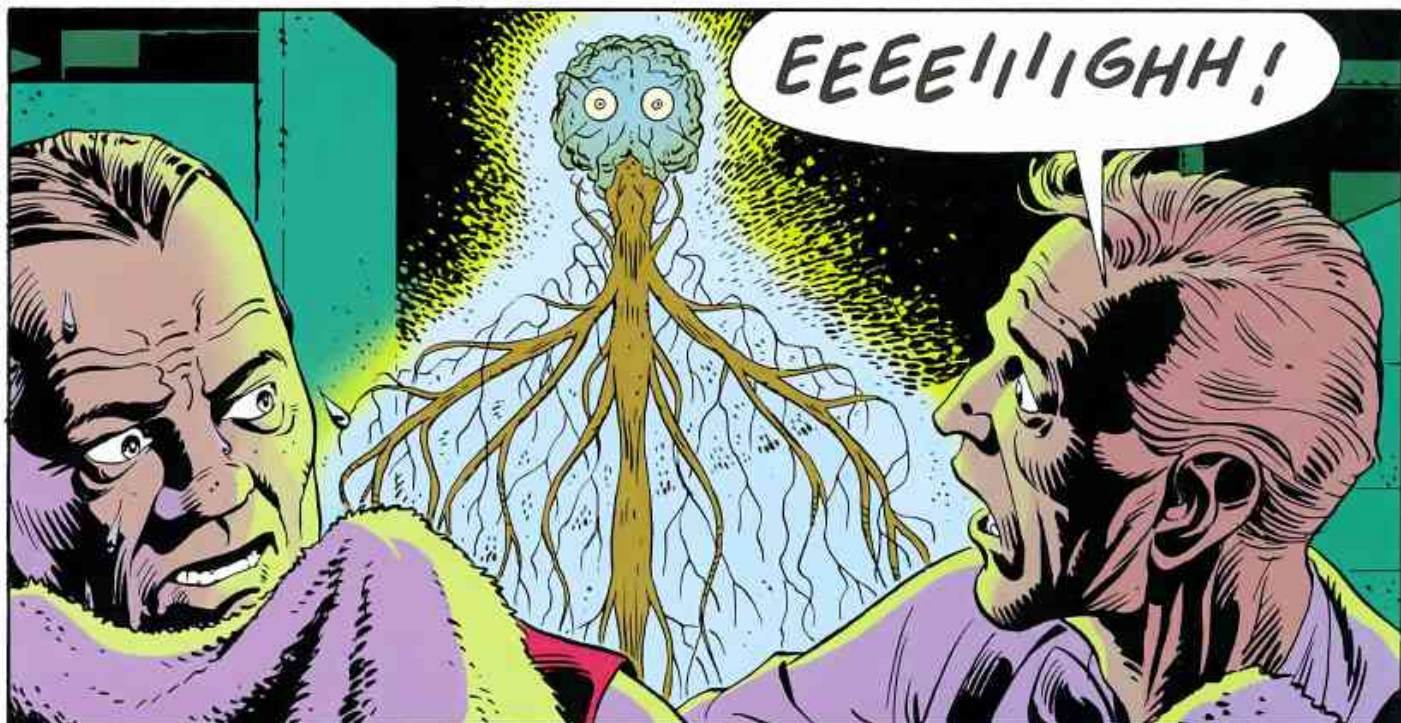


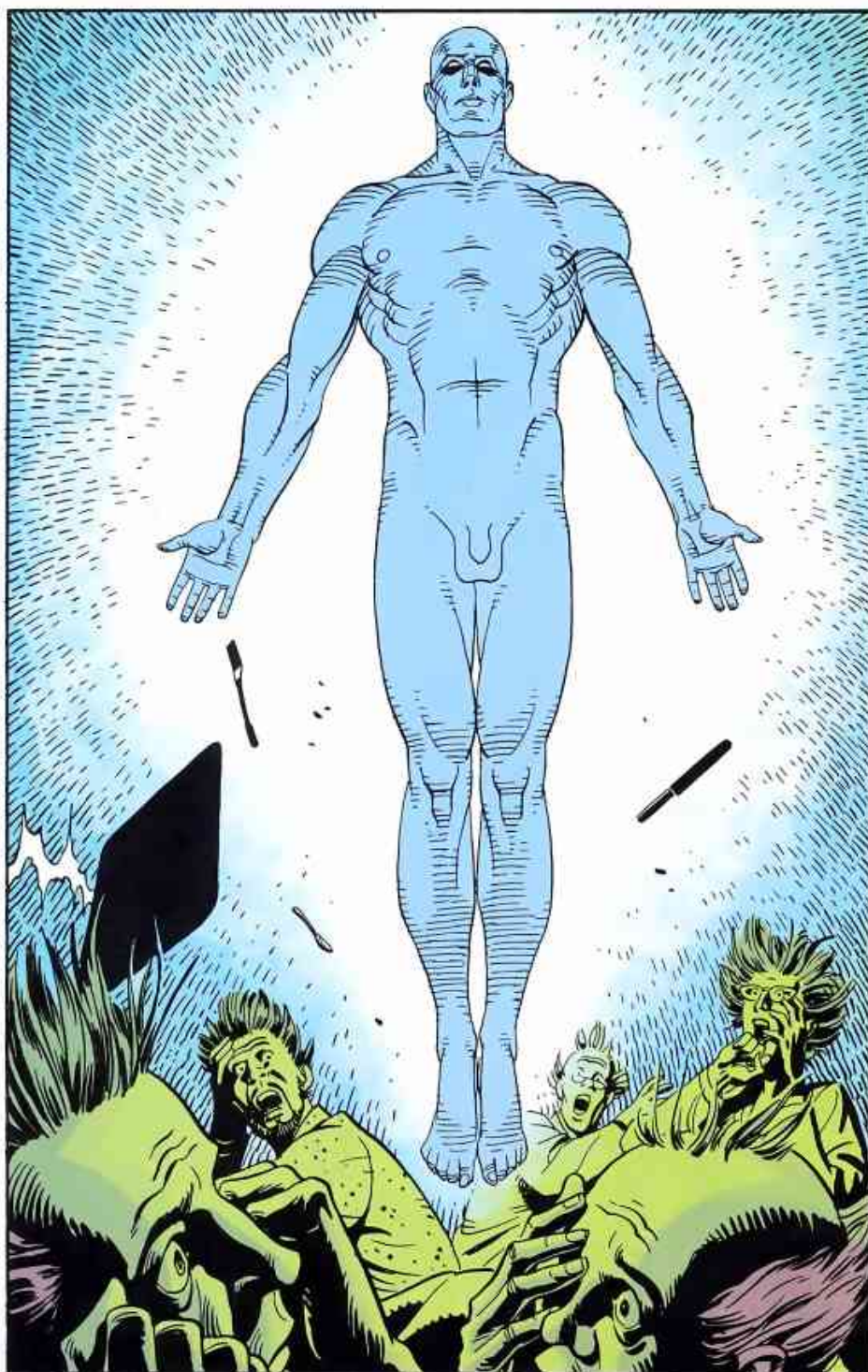
IT'S 1966. THE SUITCASE WON'T SHUT AND SHE'S CRYING.

IT'S 1985. IN ONE HUNDRED MINUTES, THE METEORITE SHOWER BEGINS.









IT'S OCTOBER, 1985. I'M BASKING IN THE TWO-MILLION-YEAR-OLD LIGHT OF ANDROMEDA. I CAN SEE THE SUPERNOVA THAT ERNST HARTWIG DISCOVERED IN 1885, A CENTURY AGO.



IT SCINTILLATES, A WINK INTENDED FOR THE TRILOBITES, ALL LONG DEAD.

SUPERNOVAS ARE WHERE GOLD FORMS; THE ONLY PLACE. ALL GOLD COMES FROM SUPERNOVAS.



IT'S CHRISTMAS, 1959...

DO... DO YOU LIKE IT? I MEAN, IS THAT THE SORT OF THING THAT YOU LIKE, NOW THAT YOU'RE, UH...

YOU KNOW.



I LIKE IT VERY MUCH. ITS ATOMIC STRUCTURE IS A PERFECT GRID, LIKE A CHECKERBOARD. IT'S...

JANEY? WHAT'S UP? ARE YOU COLD? I CAN RAISE THE TEMPERATURE...



NO... I'M NOT COLD.

I'M SCARED.



OF ME?

NO. YES, OH, GOD, LOOK, I...

I'M JUST SCARED BECAUSE EVERYTHING FEELS WEIRD. IT'S AS IF EVERYTHING'S CHANGED. NOT JUST YOU - EVERYTHING!



I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU ARE. NOBODY DOES. YOU WERE DISINTEGRATED, YOU PUT YOURSELF BACK TOGETHER...

THEY SAY YOU CAN DO ANYTHING, JON. THEY SAY YOU'RE LIKE GOD NOW.



I DON'T THINK THERE IS A GOD, JANEY. IF THERE IS, I'M NOT HIM.

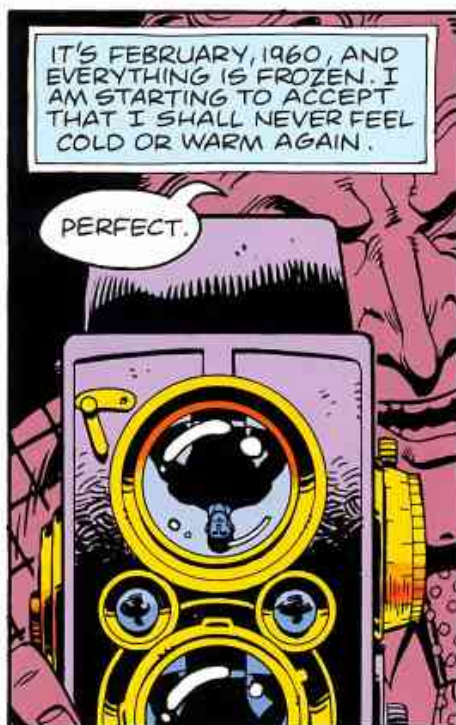
I'M STILL THE SAME PERSON. NOTHING'S CHANGED. I STILL WANT YOU...



I'LL ALWAYS WANT YOU.

AS I LIE I HEAR HER SHOUTING AT ME IN 1963; SOBBING IN 1966. MY FINGERS OPEN. THE PHOTOGRAPH IS FALLING...





MARCH, 1960...

...STILL REELING FROM THIS MORNING'S ANNOUNCEMENT, POSSIBLY THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENT IN RECENT WORLD HISTORY.

WE REPEAT: THE SUPERMAN EXISTS, AND HE'S AMERICAN.



ACCORDING TO PENTAGON SOURCES, THIS ASTONISHING INDIVIDUAL CAN CONTROL ATOMIC STRUCTURE ITSELF. WE SEE HIM HERE DISMANTLING A RIFLE WITHOUT TOUCHING IT...



...AND HERE, DEMONSTRATING THAT A PATTON TANK POSES HIM NO GREATER DIFFICULTY.



THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE FROM THE KREMLIN AS OF THIS TIME...

...AND INDEED, HOW THIS ALMOST UNBELIEVABLE DEVELOPMENT WILL AFFECT THE RACE IN WEAPONRY AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY HAS YET TO BE ASSIMILATED.



ALTHOUGH PHOTOGRAPHED LATE THIS AFTERNOON AT THE GILA FLATS TEST BASE, THE SUPERHUMAN... CODE-NAMED DR. MANHATTAN ... HAS NOT SPOKEN TO THE PRESS.



INSTEAD, WE ASKED THOSE COSTUMED VIGILANTES REMAINING FROM THE 1940'S MASKED HERO FAD HOW THEY FELT.

WELL, UHH, WE'RE PLEASED, OBVIOUSLY.



VERY, VERY PLEASED.

WELL, YOU KNOW ... THEY SAY HE WALKS THROUGH WALLS AND STUFF.

I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT.

HA! YOU KNOCKED 'EM ALL DEAD!



I MEAN, YOU WEAR AN OLD DOUBLE-BREADED SUIT FOR THAT PHOTO SESSION, AND NEXT THING, EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT ITS FASHION SIGNIFICANCE! CAN YOU IMAGINE?

YOU'VE ARRIVED.



HAVE I?

SOMETIMES I FEEL AS IF I'VE BEEN HERE ALL THE TIME.



I'M THERE NOW, IN 1960, SAYING THOSE WORDS, WATCHING THAT T.V. SET...



NOW IT'S JUNE, A CHARITY EVENT WITH SEVERAL COSTUMED ADVENTURERS ATTENDING ... FRIENDLY MIDDLE-AGED MEN WHO LIKE TO DRESS UP. I HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON WITH THEM.

ONLY THE YOUNGEST, CALLED OZYMANDIAS, SEEMS INTERESTING...



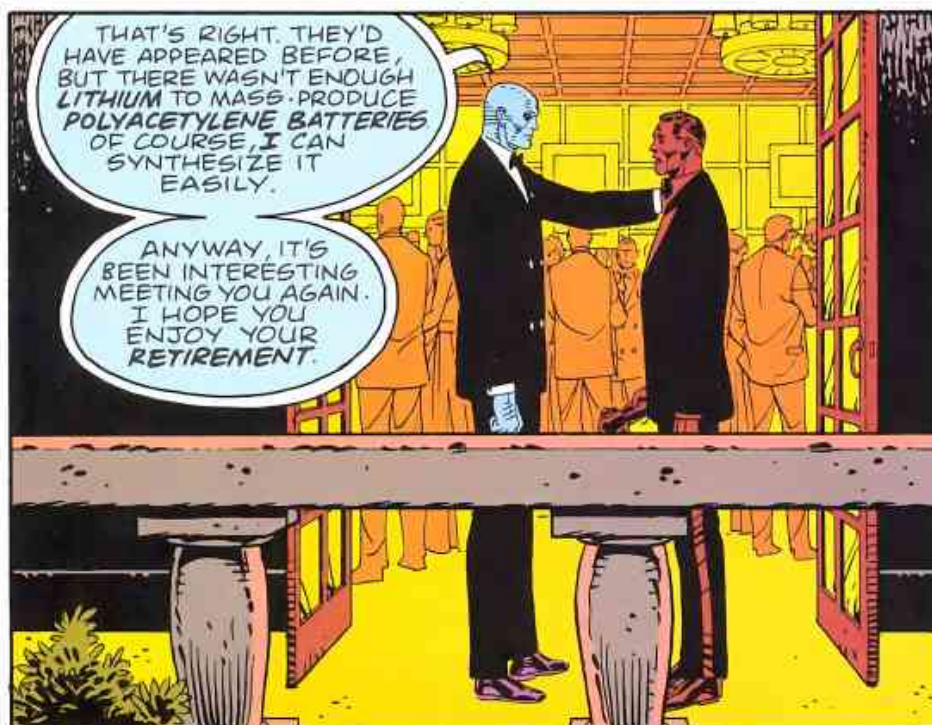
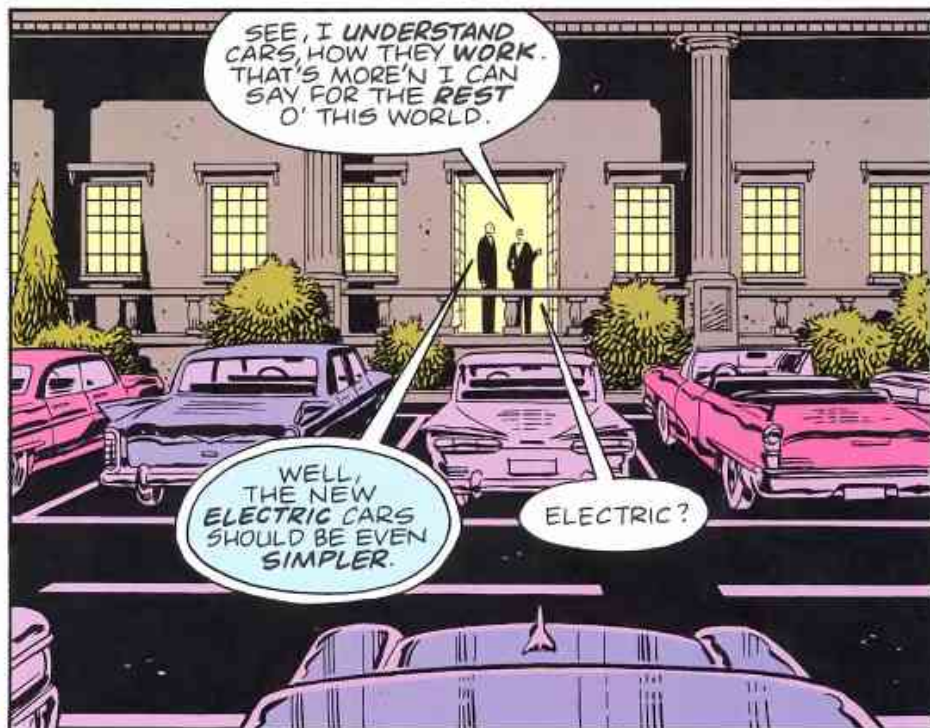
IT'S NOVEMBER. THE NEWSPAPERS CALL ME A CRIMEFIGHTER, SO THE PENTAGON SAYS I MUST FIGHT CRIME. IN MOLOCH'S UNDERGROUND VICE-DEN, THE SIGHS TURN TO SCREAMS OF TERROR.

THE MORALITY OF MY ACTIVITIES ESCAPES ME.



IT'S SEPTEMBER, 1961. JOHN KENNEDY IS SHAKING MY HAND, ASKING WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A SUPER-HERO. I TELL HIM HE SHOULD KNOW AND HE NODS, LAUGHING...

TWO YEARS LATER, IN DALLAS, HIS HEAD SNAPS FORWARD AND THEN BACK. TWO SHOTS...









IN 1969, I'M RECEIVING NEWS
OF MY FATHER'S DEATH.

IN 1959, HE'S OPENING A
TELEGRAM FROM THE
MILITARY INFORMING
HIM OF HIS SON'S
ACCIDENTAL DISINTEGRATION. I NEVER CORRECT
THEIR MISTAKE.



GILA FLATS CLOSES DOWN
IN 1970. ON LAURIE'S
TWENTIETH BIRTHDAY,
WE MOVE INTO OUR NEW
WASHINGTON APARTMENT.

I'VE REVEALED MY TRUE
NAME TO THE PUBLIC.
AFTER FATHER'S DEATH,
THERE SEEMS LITTLE POINT
IN CONCEALING IT.



IN JANUARY, 1971, PRESIDENT
NIXON IS ASKING ME TO
INTERVENE IN VIETNAM,
WHILE TEN YEARS EARLIER,
KENNEDY IS AVOIDING ANY
MENTION OF CUBA.



LATER IN NOVEMBER, I'M
TOLD THAT WALLY WEAVER HAS
DIED OF CANCER, AGED 34.

IT'S MARCH. I'M IN
SAIGON, BEING
REINTRODUCED TO
EDWARD BLAKE, THE
COMEDIAN. HE WORKS
MOSTLY FOR THE
GOVERNMENT NOW.
I SUPPOSE I
DO, TOO.

BLAKE IS INTERESTING.
I HAVE NEVER MET
ANYONE SO
DELIBERATELY AMORAL.



HE SUITS THE
CLIMATE HERE -
THE MADNESS,
THE POINTLESS
BUTCHERY...

AS I COME TO
UNDERSTAND VIETNAM
AND WHAT IT IMPLIES
ABOUT THE HUMAN
CONDITION, I ALSO
REALIZE THAT FEW
HUMANS WILL PERMIT
THEMSELVES SUCH
AN UNDERSTANDING.



BLAKE'S DIFFERENT.

HE UNDERSTANDS
PERFECTLY...

... AND HE
DOESN'T CARE.



IT'S MAY. I
HAVE BEEN
HERE TWO
MONTHS.

THE VIETCONG
ARE EXPECTED
TO SURRENDER
WITHIN THE
WEEK. MANY
HAVE GIVEN
THEMSELVES
UP ALREADY...

OFTEN, THEY ASK
TO SURRENDER TO
ME PERSONALLY,
THEIR TERROR OF
ME BALANCED BY
AN ALMOST
RELIGIOUS AWE.

I AM REMINDED OF HOW THE
JAPANESE WERE REPORTED
TO HAVE VIEWED THE ATOMIC
BOMB, AFTER HIROSHIMA.

IT'S JUNE, V.V.N. NIGHT, AND
THE COMEDIAN IS SLIDING
A GUN FROM ITS HOLSTER,
BLOOD STREAMING FROM
HIS LACERATED FACE...

IT'S OCTOBER, 1985. DECIDING
TO CREATE SOMETHING, I
TURN AWAY FROM STARS
THAT MAY HAVE BURNED
OUT AEONS AGO. I NO
LONGER WISH TO LOOK
AT THEM.

I NO LONGER
WISH TO LOOK
AT DEAD
THINGS.

IT'S 1975. THE PAPERS ARE FULL OF THE PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED **CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT**, ALLOWING HIM TO RUN NEXT YEAR FOR A THIRD TERM.

AMIDST ALL THIS, THE UNMASKING AND RETIREMENT OF **OZYMANDIAS** GOES ALMOST UNNOTICED.



ADRIAN VEIDT ALIAS
OZYMANDIAS

**SMART MAN IN
WORLD
GOES PUBLIC**

HIS REAL NAME IS **ADRIAN VEIDT**, A SELF-MADE MILLIONAIRE. AFTER RETIRING FROM ADVENTURING HE INVITES LAURIE AND ME TO VISIT HIM AT HIS ANTARCTIC RETREAT.

OOH!
WHAT IS IT? IT'S
BEAUTIFUL!

THAT'S **BUBASTIS**. SHE'S A GENETICALLY ALTERED **LYNX**. THEY COST RATHER A LOT TO FEED, I'M AFRAID.

I HADN'T REALIZED THAT **EUGENICS** WAS SO ADVANCED NOW...

IT'S LEAPT FORWARD IN THE LAST FIFTEEN YEARS. **EVERYTHING** HAS, FROM QUANTUM PHYSICS TO TRANSPORT.

FOR EXAMPLE, I UNDERSTAND THAT FAST AND SAFE AIRSHIPS MAY SOON BE ECONOMICALLY VIABLE...

...AND WE OWE IT ALL TO YOU. WITH YOUR HELP, OUR SCIENTISTS ARE LIMITED ONLY BY THEIR IMAGINATIONS.

AND BY THEIR CONSCIENCES, SURELY?

LET'S HOPE SO.

HIS EYES ARE SAD AND KNOWING. HIS SERVANTS BRING US **INDONESIAN FOOD** AND HE TALKS ABOUT HIS BUSINESS PLANS, ALL THE TIME FEEDING SCRAPS TO HIS BEAUTIFUL MONSTROUS CAT...

IT'S 1985. CHOOSING A SPOT TO BEGIN MY CREATION, I SIT DOWN. PINK SAND LIES POOLED IN MY BLUE PALM.

THIS DESERTED PLANET - IT IS SO WONDERFULLY, COMPLETELY SILENT.



IN 1977, A CITY IS SHOUTING.

CLAIMING THAT COSTUMED ADVENTURERS ARE MAKING THEIR JOB IMPOSSIBLE, THE POLICE ARE ON STRIKE. EVERYONE IS FRIGHTENED, SCENTING ANARCHY.



BELOW ME, LAURIE HAULS THE RINGLEADERS FROM THE CROWD, BUT THE PROCESS IS TOO SLOW...



LOOK AT HIM! LOOK AT THAT FREAK! IT'S AGAINST GOD!

I'D BEST DO SOMETHING...

PAY ATTENTION. YOU WILL ALL RETURN TO YOUR HOMES.

OH, YEAH? AND WHAT IF WE DON'T YA BIG BLUE FRUIT?



YOU MISUNDERSTAND ME.

IT WAS NOT A REQUEST.



JESUS.

THE NEXT DAY, I AM READING IN THE PAPER OF TWO PEOPLE WHO SUFFERED HEART ATTACKS UPON SUDDENLY FINDING THEMSELVES INDOORS. MORE WOULD HAVE SUFFERED DURING A RIOT, I'M CERTAIN.





AUGUST 3RD, 1977:
THE EMERGENCY
BILL PROPOSED
BY SENATOR
KEENE HAS BEEN
PASSED.

VIGILANTISM IS NOW
ILLEGAL AGAIN, AS
IT WAS BEFORE THEY
ALTERED THE LAWS
TO ACCOMMODATE
STRATEGICALLY
USEFUL TALENTS
SUCH AS MYSELF.



AS LONG AS I CONTINUE
TO ACT UNDER U.S.
GOVERNMENT SUPERVISION,
I AM EXEMPT FROM THE
LAW. THEY CAN HARDLY
OUTLAW ME WHEN THEIR
COUNTRY'S DEFENSE
RESTS IN MY HANDS.



BLAKE IS ALSO
EXEMPT, SINCE
HE TOO WORKS
ENTIRELY FOR
THE GOVERNMENT.

LATER, AFTER HIS
HANDLING OF THE
IRANIAN HOSTAGE
SITUATION, EVEN
HIS HARSHTEST
CRITICS FALL SILENT.
LAURIE STILL HATES
HIM, HOWEVER.



SHE HERSELF HAS BEEN
FORCED TO RETIRE BY
THE KEENE ACT, BUT
HAVING NEVER REALLY
ENJOYED THE LIFE,
SHE DOESN'T MIND.

HER MOTHER
IS MORE
DISAPPOINTED
THAN SHE
IS.



THE NEW NITE OWL
HAS STATED THAT
HE WILL BE
RETIRED, ALTHOUGH
HE WILL NOT BE
MAKING HIS
IDENTITY PUBLIC.

LAURIE'S MET HIM
SEVERAL TIMES. SHE
SAYS HIS NAME
IS DREIBERG.



THE ONLY OTHER ACTIVE
VIGILANTE IS CALLED
RORSCHACH, REAL
NAME UNKNOWN.

HE EXPRESSES HIS FEELINGS
TOWARD COMPULSORY
RETIREMENT IN A NOTE LEFT
OUTSIDE POLICE HEAD-
QUARTERS ALONG WITH A
DEAD MULTIPLE RAPIST.

IT'S 1981 NOW. LAURIE AND I ARE SETTLING INTO OUR NEW QUARTERS AT THE ROCKEFELLER MILITARY RESEARCH CENTER IN NEW YORK.

IT'S WELL-EQUIPPED FOR MY WORK, BUT LAURIE FEELS WE'VE LOST OUR PRIVACY.



SHE'D LIKE IT HERE.

THROUGH MY BLUE FINGERS, PINK GRAINS ARE FALLING, HAPHAZARD, RANDOM, A DISORGANIZED STREAM OF SILICONE THAT SEEMS PREGNANT WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF EVERY CONCEIVABLE SHAPE...



... BUT THIS IS ILLUSION. THINGS HAVE THEIR SHAPE IN TIME, NOT SPACE ALONE. SOME MARBLE BLOCKS HAVE STATUES WITHIN THEM, EMBEDDED IN THEIR FUTURE.



IN NEW YORK, WE GO WALKING.

THE STREETS SMELL OF OZONE RATHER THAN GASOLINE. FLAT INTANGIBLE BLOTS OF GRAY SLIDE ACROSS THE SUMMER SIDEWALKS, THE SHADOWS OF OVERHEAD AIRSHIPS.



IN 1959, A CHILD IS WEEPING FOR ITS LOST BALLOONS.



ANY MOMENT NOW, JANEY'S WATCHBAND WILL BREAK. SOMEWHERE, THE FAT MAN IS ALREADY LUMBERING TOWARD THE SHOOTING GALLERY, STEPS HEAVY WITH UNWITTING DESTINY.

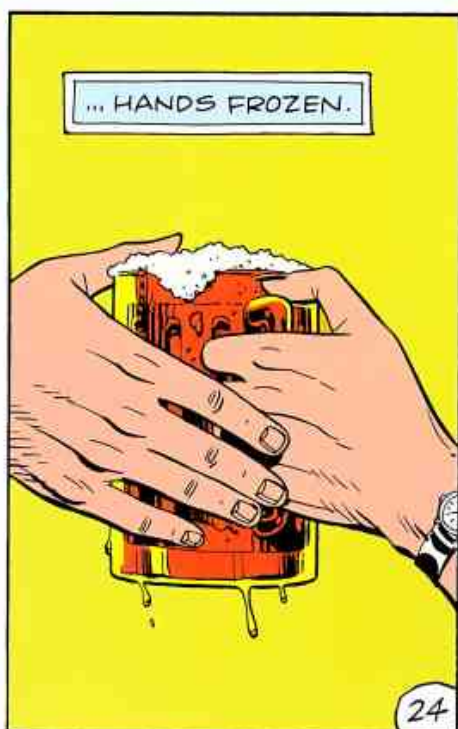
IT'S AUGUST, 1985. I'M WALKING THROUGH GRAND CENTRAL STATION WITH LAURIE. WE STOP AT THE NEWSSTAND AND BUY A COPY OF TIME MAGAZINE, COMMEMORATING HIROSHIMA WEEK.



ON THE COVER THERE IS A DAMAGED POCKET-WATCH, STOPPED AT THE INSTANT OF THE BLAST, FACE CRACKED...



... HANDS FROZEN.



IT'S SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12TH, 1985, AND WE ARE BEING INFORMED OF EDWARD BLAKE'S MURDER.

LAURIE'S MOOD SEEMS RESTLESS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE WEEKEND.



WEDNESDAY THE 16TH. LAURIE IS VISITING HER MOTHER WHILE I ATTEND BLAKE'S FUNERAL.

A THIN MAN IN A BLACK COAT LEAVES ROSES, THEN WALKS AWAY. DO I KNOW HIM?



SATURDAY THE 19TH NOW. MY HANDS ENCIRCLE LAURIE'S FACE...

IN 1966, THE COSTUMED PEOPLE ARE ARGUING.



IN 1959, I AM TELLING JANEY I SHALL ALWAYS WANT HER.

IT'S LATER. LAURIE IS WALKING OUT ON ME.

ON A ROOFTOP IN THE PAST, I PULL HER SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD BODY TO ME, BREATHING HER PERFUME, NEVER WANTING TO LOSE HER, KNOWING THAT I SHALL.



LATER STILL, AND IN THE CROWDED T.V. STUDIO, I AM BEING ACCUSED OF KILLING THOSE CLOSEST TO ME.



THE WORD "CANCER" RUNS THROUGH THE AUDIENCE ON A FIRECRACKER STRING OF ANXIOUS WHISPERS.

I AM TIRED OF THIS WORLD; THESE PEOPLE. I AM TIRED OF BEING CAUGHT IN THE TANGLE OF THEIR LIVES.

IN ARIZONA, I'M ENTERING THE RUINED BAR WITH A SENSATION OF DÉJÀ VU...



...AND I'M TAKING THE SNAPSHOT FROM ITS BROKEN FRAME...



...AND I'M GONE.





GONE TO
MARS.

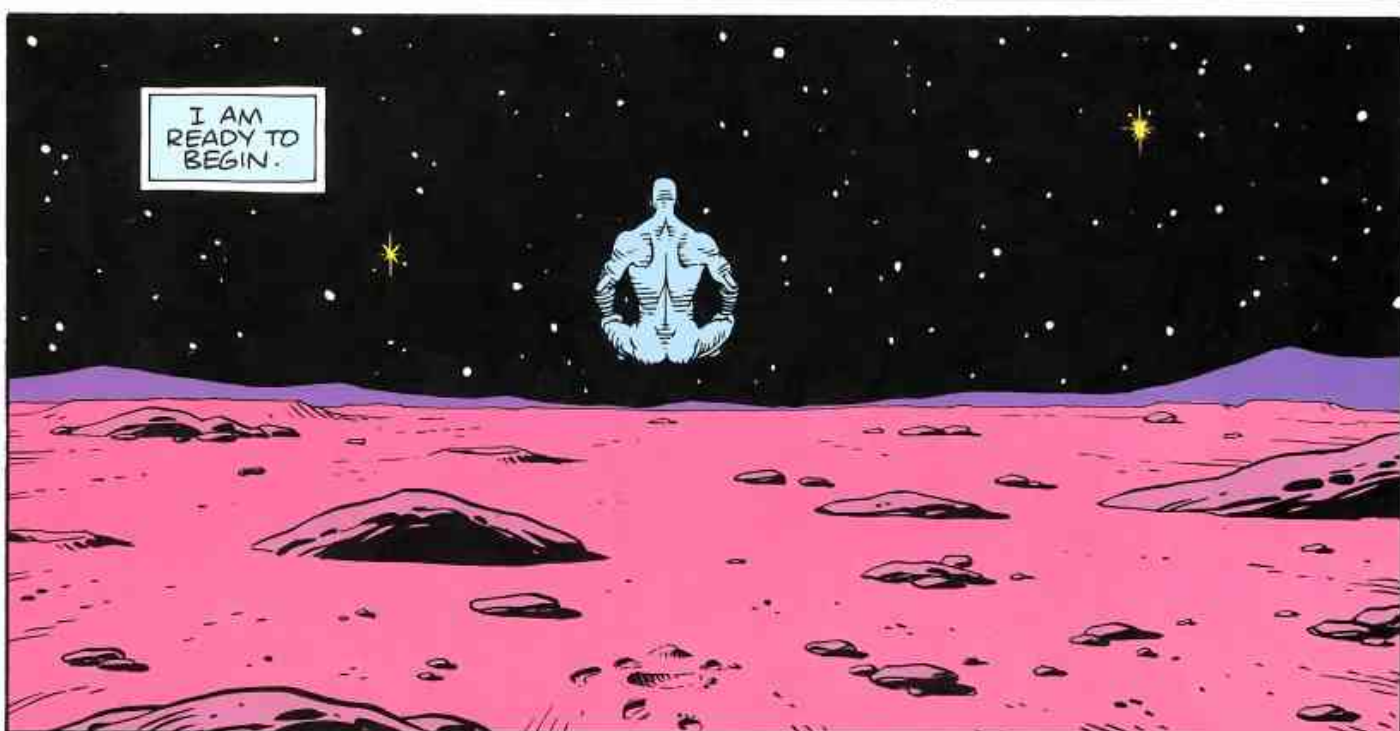


GONE TO A PLACE WITHOUT
CLOCKS, WITHOUT SEASONS,
WITHOUT HOURGLASSES
TO TRAP THE SHIFTING
PINK SAND.

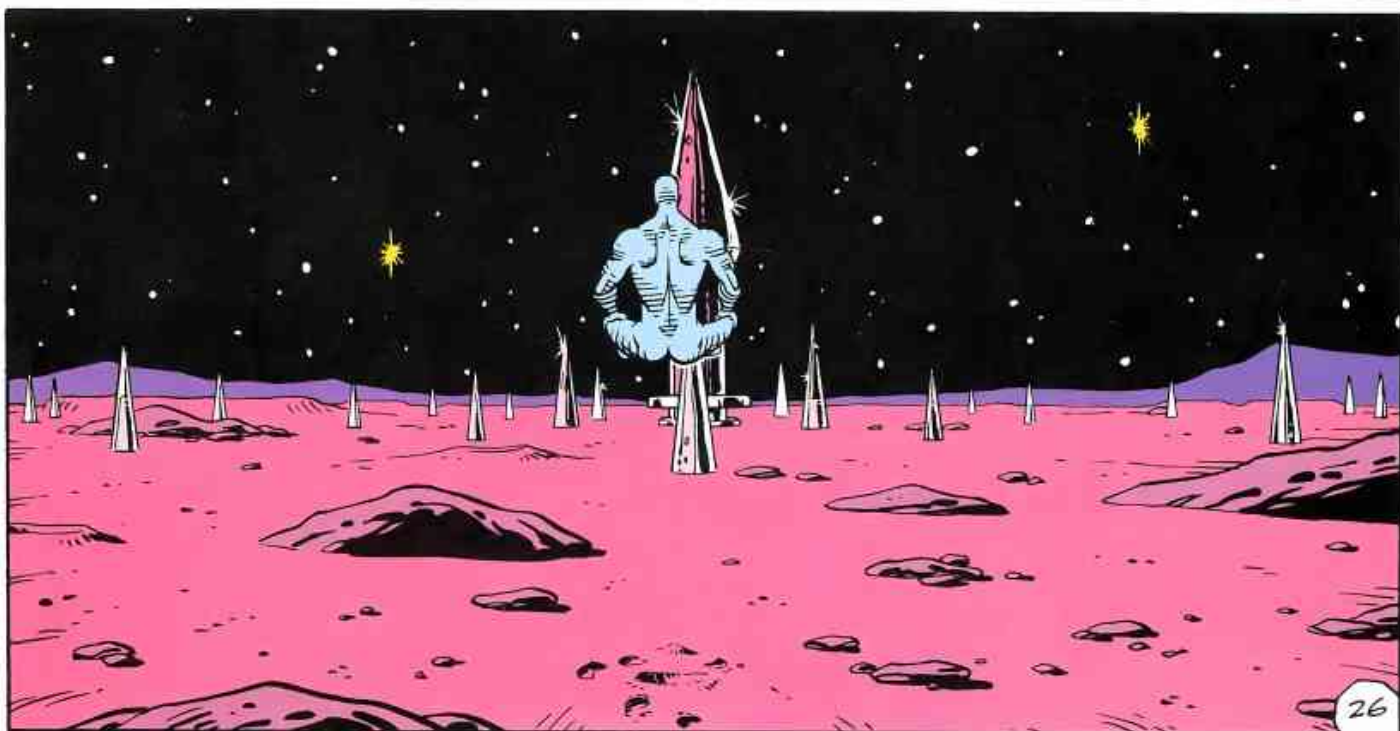


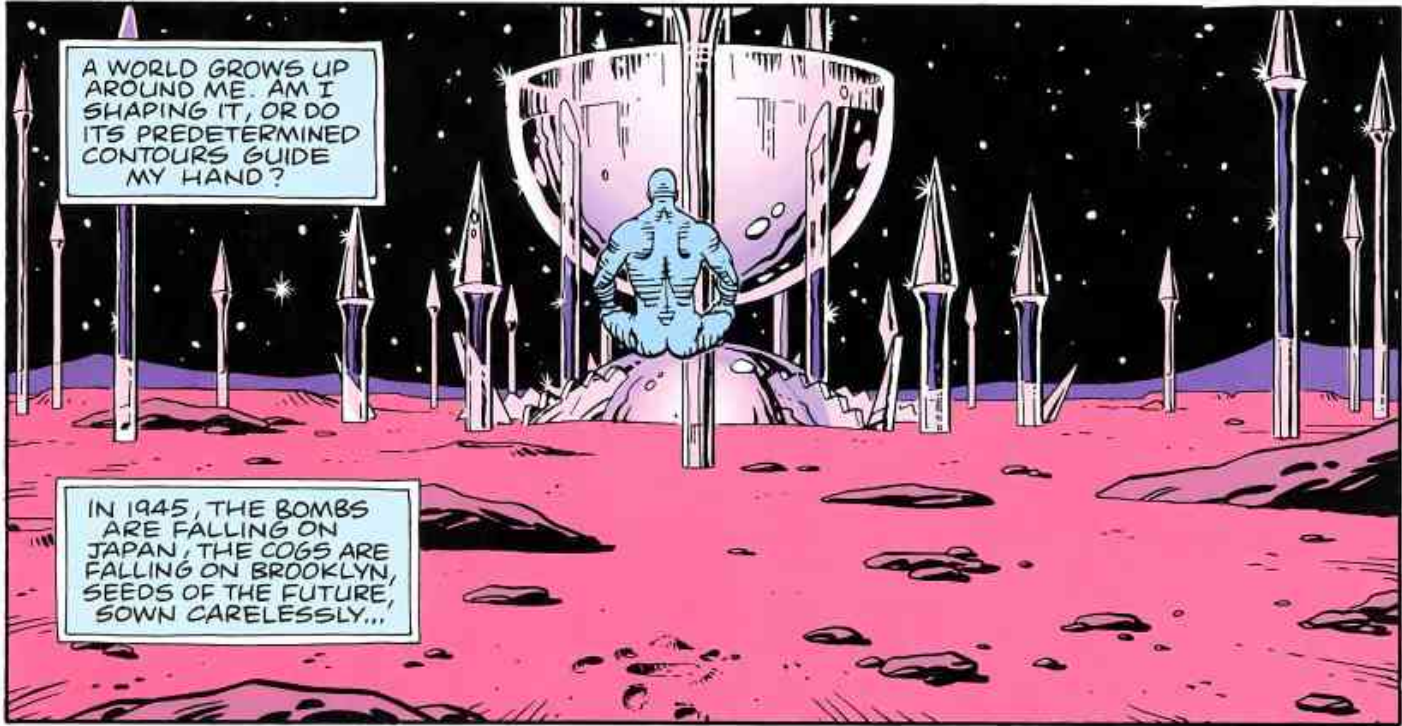
BELOW ME, IN THE
SAND, THE SECRET
SHAPE OF MY CREATION
IS CONCEALED, BURIED
IN THE SAND'S FUTURE.

I RISE INTO THE THIN AIR.



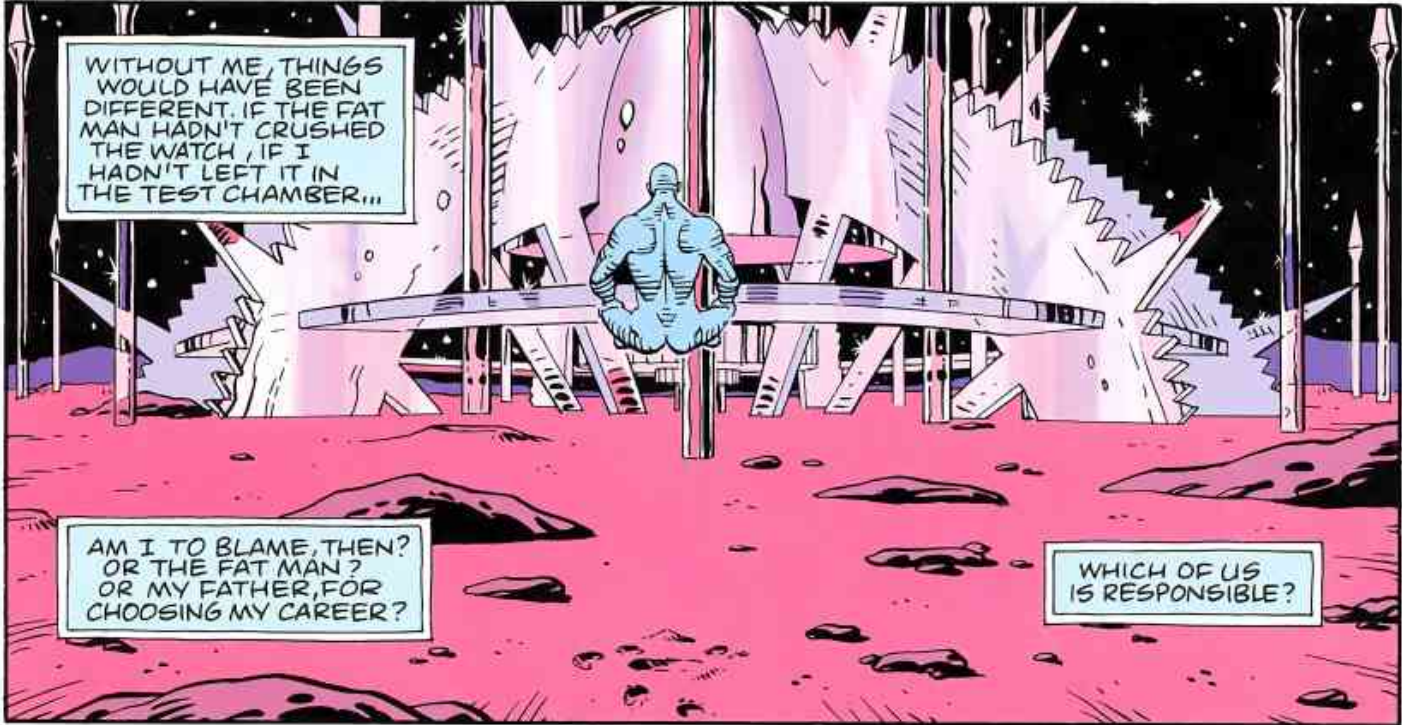
I AM
READY TO
BEGIN.





A WORLD GROWS UP
AROUND ME. AM I
SHAPING IT, OR DO
ITS PREDETERMINED
CONTOURS GUIDE
MY HAND?

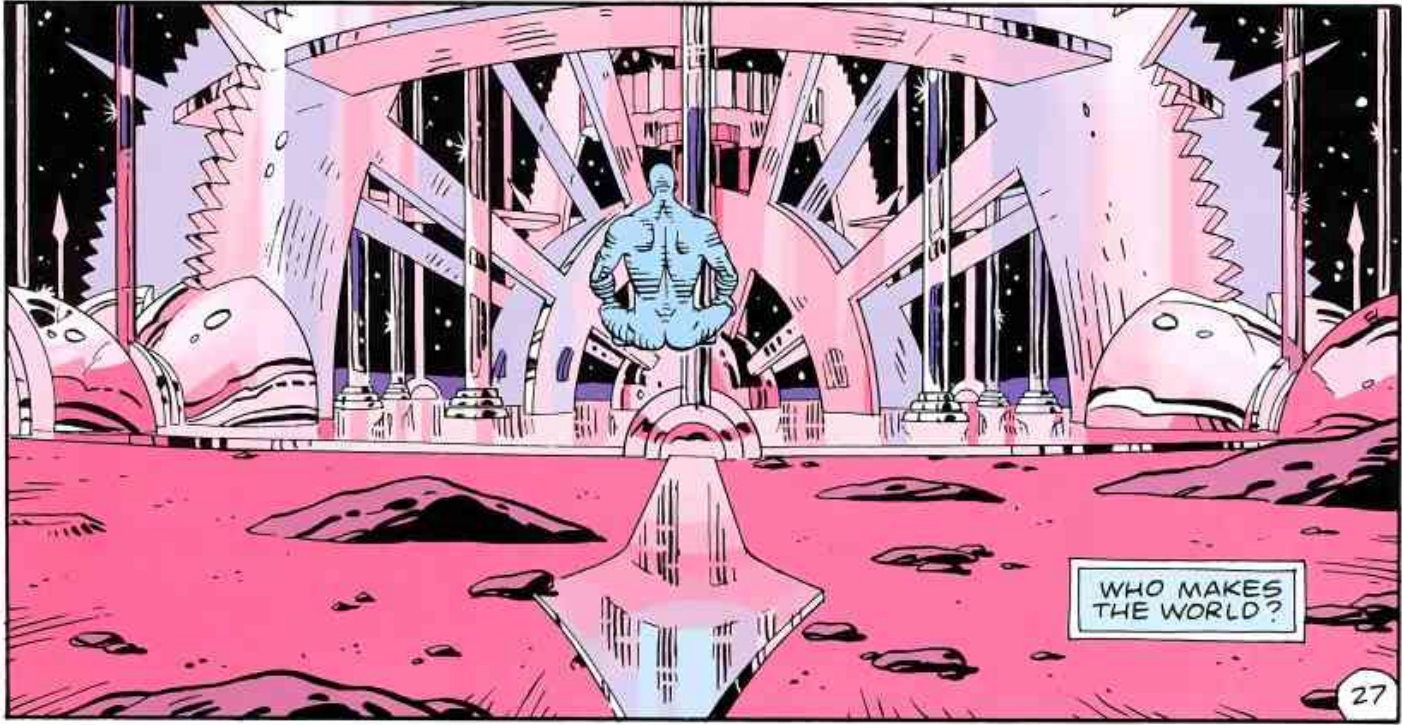
IN 1945, THE BOMBS
ARE FALLING ON
JAPAN, THE COGS ARE
FALLING ON BROOKLYN,
SEEDS OF THE FUTURE,
SOWN CARELESSLY...



WITHOUT ME, THINGS
WOULD HAVE BEEN
DIFFERENT. IF THE FAT
MAN HADN'T CRUSHED
THE WATCH, IF I
HADN'T LEFT IT IN
THE TEST CHAMBER...

AM I TO BLAME, THEN?
OR THE FAT MAN?
OR MY FATHER, FOR
CHOOSING MY CAREER?

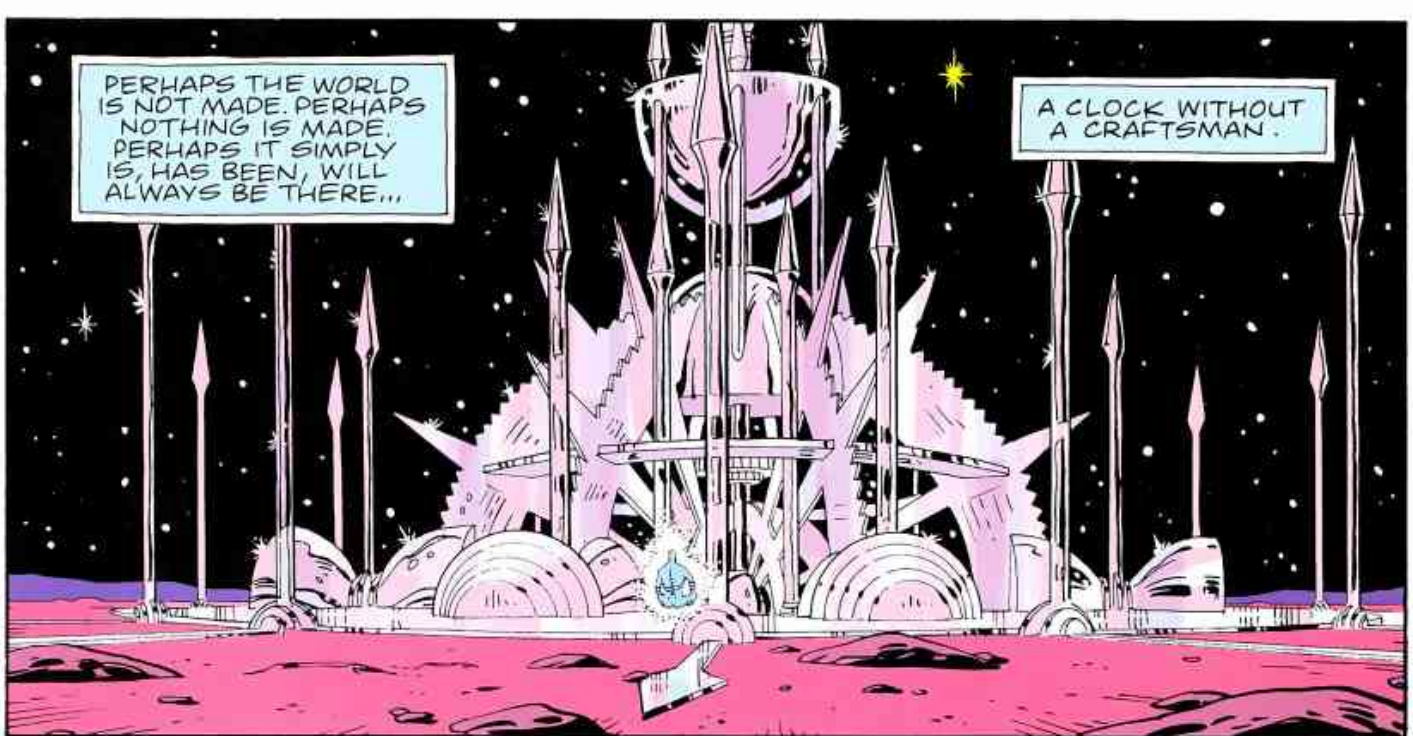
WHICH OF US
IS RESPONSIBLE?



WHO MAKES
THE WORLD?

PERHAPS THE WORLD
IS NOT MADE. PERHAPS
NOTHING IS MADE.
PERHAPS IT SIMPLY
IS, HAS BEEN, WILL
ALWAYS BE THERE...

A CLOCK WITHOUT
A CRAFTSMAN.



I AM STANDING ON A
BALCONY OF PINK SAND,
HARDENED TO GLASS. IT
GLITTERS IN THE TEN-
MINUTE-OLD SUNSHINE.

THE LIGHT
OF TWO
HOURS PAST
WILL JUST BE
REACHING
PLUTO.



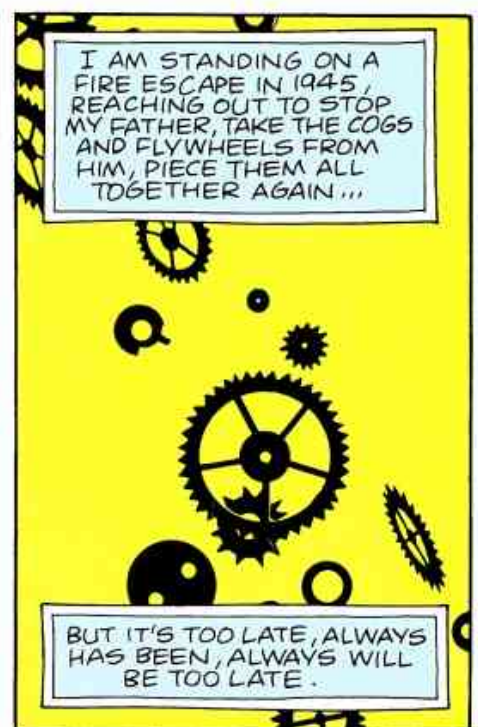
IF THEY HAVE STRONG
TELESCOPES THERE, THEY
CAN SEE ME; THE
PHOTOGRAPH IN MY
HAND, FALLING ...

LYING IN
THE SAND
AT MY FEET.

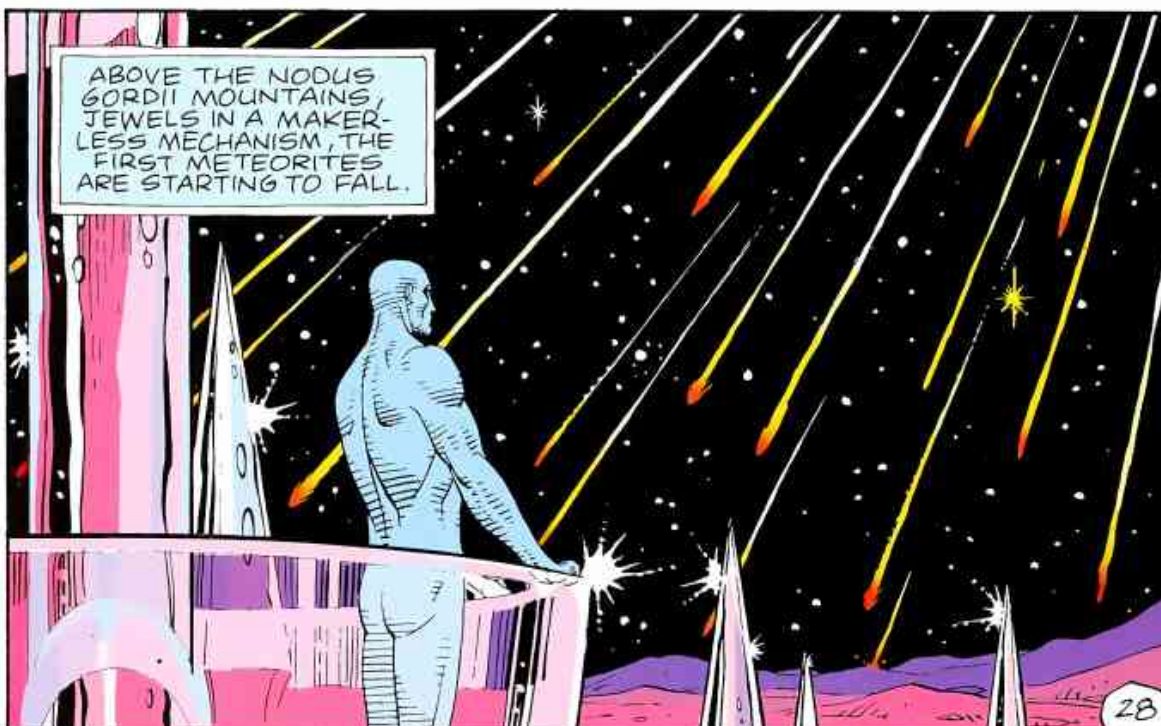


I AM STANDING ON A
FIRE ESCAPE IN 1945,
REACHING OUT TO STOP
MY FATHER, TAKE THE COGS
AND FLYWHEELS FROM
HIM, PIECE THEM ALL
TOGETHER AGAIN ...

BUT IT'S TOO LATE, ALWAYS
HAS BEEN, ALWAYS WILL
BE TOO LATE.



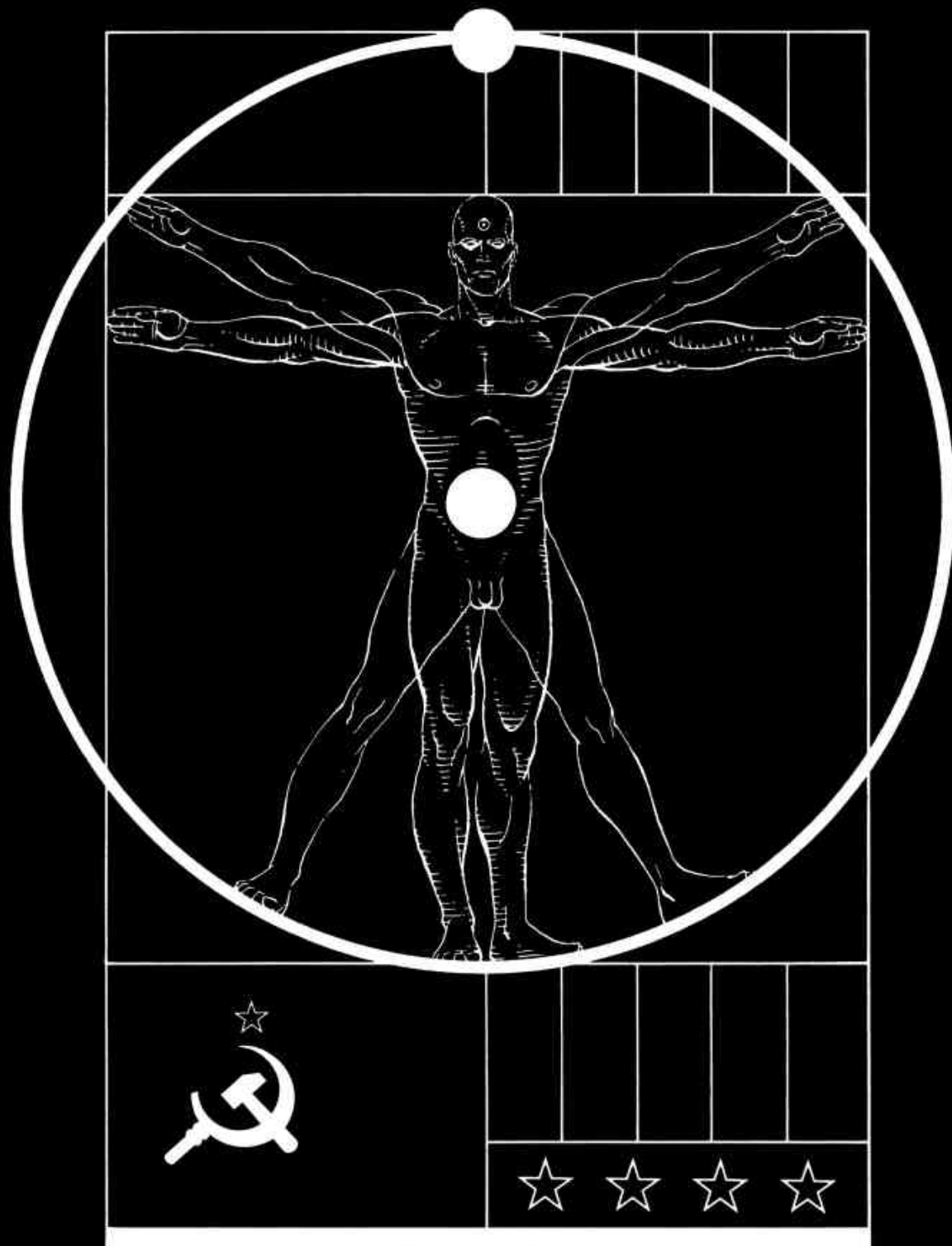
ABOVE THE NODUS
GORDII MOUNTAINS,
JEWELS IN A MAKER-
LESS MECHANISM, THE
FIRST METEORITES
ARE STARTING TO FALL.



The release
of atom power
has changed
everything
except our way
of thinking...
The solution
to this problem
lies in the heart
of mankind.
If only I had
known, I should
have become
a watchmaker.
—Albert Einstein



DR. MANHATTAN: SUPER-POWERS AND THE SUPERPOWERS



BY PROFESSOR MILTON GLASS

Introduction

For those of us who delight in such things, the twentieth century has, in its unfolding, presented mankind with an array of behavioral paradoxes and moral conundrums hitherto unimagined and perhaps unimaginable. Science, traditional enemy of mysticism and religion, has taken on a growing understanding that the model of the universe suggested by quantum physics differs very little from the universe that Taoists and other mystics have existed in for centuries. Large numbers of young people, raised in rigidly structured and industrially oriented cultures, violently reject industrialism and seek instead some modified version of the agricultural lifestyle that their forebears (debatably) enjoyed, including extended communal families and in some instances a barter economy in miniature. Children starve while boots costing many thousands of dollars leave their mark upon the surface of the moon. We have labored long to build a heaven, only to find it populated with horrors.

It is the oldest ironies that are still the most satisfying: man, when preparing for bloody war, will orate loudly and most eloquently in the name of peace. This dichotomy is not an invention of the twentieth century, yet it is in this century that the most striking examples of the phenomena have appeared. Never before has man pursued global harmony more vocally while amassing stockpiles of weapons so devastating in their effect. The second world war—we were told—was The War To End Wars. The development of the atomic bomb is the Weapon To End Wars.

And yet wars continue. Currently, no nation on this planet is not involved in some form of armed struggle, if not against its neighbors then against internal forces. Furthermore, as ever-escalating amounts of money are poured into the pursuit of the specific weapon or conflict that will bring lasting peace, the drain on our economies creates a run-down urban landscape where crime flourishes and people are concerned less with national security than with the simple personal security needed to stop at the store late at night for a quart of milk without being mugged. The places we struggled so viciously to keep safe are becoming increasingly dangerous. The wars to end wars, the weapons to end wars, these things have failed us.

Now we have a man to end wars.

Since my association with Dr. Jonathan Osterman and the being he eventually became are well documented elsewhere, I feel I need only recap them briefly here. In 1959, in an accident that was certainly unplanned and just as certainly unrepeatable, a young American man was completely disintegrated, at least in a physical sense. Despite the absence of a body, a form of electromagnetic pattern resembling consciousness survived, and was able, in time, to rebuild an approximation of the body it had lost.

Perhaps in the process of reconstructing its corporeal form, this new and wholly original entity achieved a complete mastery of all matter; able to shape reality by the manipulation of its basic building blocks. When news of this being's phenomenal genesis was first released to the world, a certain phrase was used that has—at varying times—been attributed both to me and to others. On the newsflashes coming over our tvs on that fateful night, one sentence was repeated over and over again: 'The superman exists and he's American.'

I never said that, although I do recall saying something similar to a persistent reporter who would not leave without a quote. I presume the remark was edited or toned down so as not to offend public sensibilities; in any event, I never said 'The superman exists and he's American'. What I said was 'God exists and he's American'. If that statement starts to chill you after a couple of moments' consideration, then don't be alarmed. A feeling of intense and crushing religious terror at the concept indicates only that you are still sane.

Since the mid-1960s, when the dazed and numbed mass consciousness first began to comprehend the significance of this new life form in humanity's midst, the political balance has changed drastically. Many people in this country feel that this is for the best. America's unquestioned military supremacy has also provided us with a certain economic leverage where we can dictate the economic policies of the western world and direct them to our advantage. There is little wonder, then, that the idea of a world run by an omnipotent God-King owing allegiance to the United States seems eminently desirable. By placing our superhuman benefactor in the position of a walking nuclear deterrent, it is assumed we have finally guaranteed lasting peace on earth. It is with this last contention that my most serious point of issue lies: I do not believe that we have a man to end wars.

I believe that we have made a man to end worlds.

The assumption that America's opponents are powerless before Dr. Manhattan, while comforting, begins to fail before closer examination. As I understand current Pentagon thinking, the conventional wisdom suggests that when faced with an insoluble problem, the Soviet Union will have no other option than acceptance of a loss of world influence culminating in its eventual defeat. It has been demonstrated, at least in well-supported theoretical terms, that Dr. Manhattan could at any time destroy large areas of Soviet territory instantly. It has been similarly theoretically demonstrated that, were a full scale nuclear assault to be launched upon America from Soviet bases in the U.S.S.R. and Europe, Dr. Manhattan would be able to deflect or disarm at least sixty percent of all incoming missiles before they had reached their targets. Against odds like that, it is argued, Russia would never risk instigating a full-scale global conflict. Since it is not in America's interests to promote such a conflict, does that mean that global peace is once and finally assured? No. It does not.

For one thing, it is an assumption based upon the belief that American psychology and its Soviet counterpart are interchangeable. To understand the Russian attitude to the possibility of a third world war one must first understand their attitude to the second. In WWII, none of the allied powers fought so bitterly or sustained such losses as did the Russians. It was Hitler's lack of success in his assault upon the

Soviet heartland that assured his eventual defeat, and though it was paid for mostly by Soviet lives, the entire world reaped the benefits. In time, the Russian contribution to the war effort has been downplayed and dismissed—most noticeably as our political differences became wider—as we glorified our own contribution while forgetting that of our estranged former allies. The Russians, however, have not forgotten. There are still those who remember the horror of a war fought on their soil, and almost certainly there are members of the Politburo in that category. From my reading of various pronouncements made by the Russian high command over the years, I am convinced that they will never again permit their nation to be threatened in a similar manner, *no matter what the cost*.

The presence of a deterrent such as Dr. Manhattan has doubtless curbed Soviet adventurism, as there have been numerous occasions when the U.S.S.R. has had to step down over some issue rather than risk escalation into a war it certainly could not win. Often, these reversals have been humiliating, and this has perhaps fostered the illusion that the Soviets will suffer such indignities endlessly. This is a misconception, for there is indeed another option available.

That option is Mutually Assured Destruction. Stated simply, Dr. Manhattan cannot stop all the Soviet warheads from reaching American soil, even a greatly reduced percentage would still be more than enough to effectively end the organic life in the northern hemisphere. The suggestion that the presence of a superhuman has inclined the world more towards peace is refuted by the sharp increase in both Russian and American nuclear stockpiles since the advent of Dr. Manhattan. Infinite destruction divided by two or ten or twenty is still infinite destruction. If threatened with eventual domination, would the Soviets pursue this unquestionably suicidal course? Yes. Given their history and their view of the world, I believe that they would.

Our current administration believes otherwise. They continually push their unearned advantage until American influence comes uncomfortably close to key areas of Soviet interest. It is as if—with a real live Deity on their side—our leaders have become intoxicated with a heady draught of Omnipotence-by-Association, without realizing just how his very existence has deformed the lives of every living creature on the face of this planet.

This is true in a domestic sense as well as a broader, international one. The technology that Dr. Manhattan has made possible has changed the way we think about our clothes, our food, our travel. We drive in electric cars and travel in leisure and comfort in clean, economical airships. Our entire culture has had to contort itself to accommodate the presence of something more than human, and we have all felt the results of this. The evidence surrounds us, in our everyday lives and on the front pages of the newspapers we read. One single being has been allowed to change the entire world, pushing it closer to its eventual destruction in the process. The Gods now walk amongst us, affecting the lives of every man, woman and child on the planet in a direct way rather than through mythology and the reassurances of faith. The safety of a whole world rests in the hands of a being far beyond what we understand to be human.

We are all of us living in the shadow of Manhattan.

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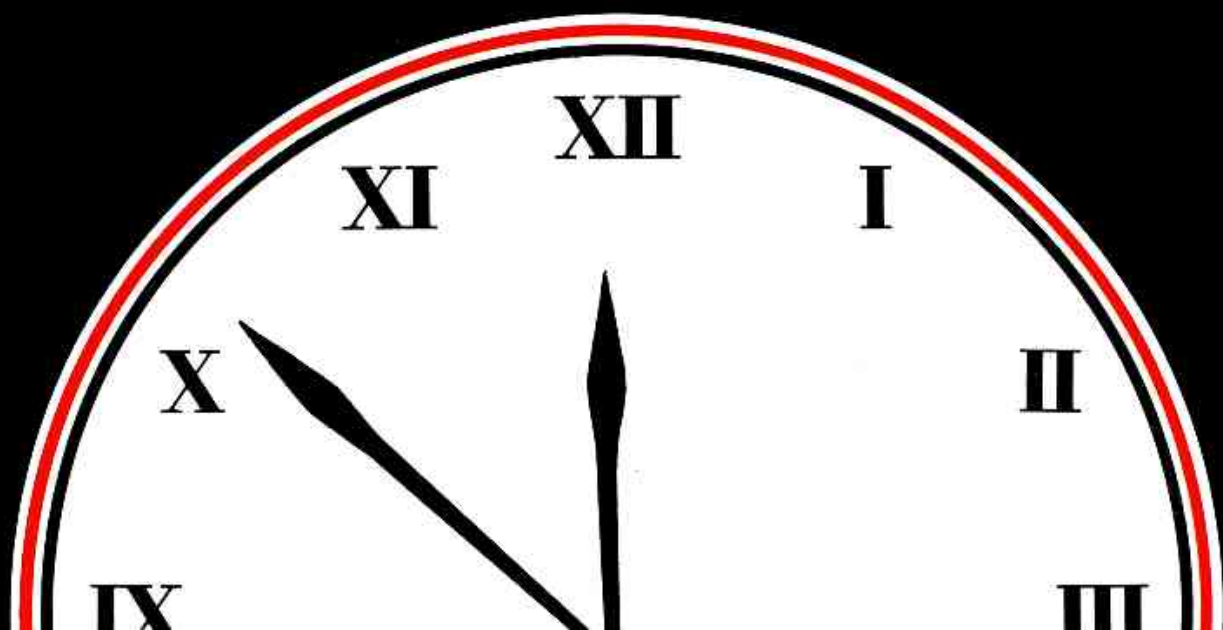
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